(d) the total expenditure incured on the import of onion from Pakistan; and

(e) the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) and (b) No import of fresh onion was reported during April, 1999 to September, 1999.

(c) and (d) The quantity of onion imported and total expenditure incurred on the import of onion from Pakistan during 1997-98 and 1998-99 is as under:—

Qty. in Tonnes

Value in Rs. Lakh

year	Quantity	Value
1997-98	–	–
1998-99	41.5	96.56

(e) Onions are freely importable.

Import Duty on Marble Products/Stones

†4447. DR. MAHESH CHANDRA SHARMA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Import duty is less on marble products;

(b) whether it is also a fact that import duty on marble stones is more; and

(c) in what way it will be beneficial to India?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) to (c) Marble products are classified under Exim Heading 68.02 of ITC(HS) Classifications of Export and Import Items, 1997-2002. Import of these items attract basic Customs duty @ 35%, Surcharge @ 3.5% and Special Additional Duty @ 4%. These items also attract Additional Duty of Customs @ 16%.

Marble stone including rough and crude marble is classified under Exim Heading 25.15 of ITC(HS) Classifications of Export and Import Items, 1997-

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

2002. Import of these products attract Basic Customs duty @ 35% Surchage @ 3.5% and Special Additional Duty @ 4% Marble slabs and Tiles manufactured with the aid of power attract Additional Duty of Customs @ 30 Rs. Per sq. metre. For other products in this heading Additional Duty of Customs is Nil.

Additional Duty of Customs is charged equivalent to the Excise duty chargeable on similar products manufactured in India. Thus as can be seen above, import duty applicable on marble products and marble stones in the same and provides equal protection to the marble stone and marble product manufacturers in the country

Long Term Partnership With Nigeria

4448. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) Whether it is fact that India is seriously thinking to build a long term partnership with Nigeria;

(b) whether Indian Railway Construction Company (IRCON) is looking for a lucrative contract in that country;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) what are the other areas where India can gain in trade and commerce with Nigeria?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) Sir, India & Nigeria are already long term partners in trade, investment and economic cooperation and India is interested in maintaining & strengthening this partnership.

(b) & (c) At present IRCON does not have any business in Nigeria. However, Nigerian railways have long term plans for modernisation and expansion of their railway network, though no specific tenders have been issued by the Nigerian authorities as yet. IRCON would be interested in participating intenders to secure business in Nigeria.

(d) The other areas where India can benefit from trade and commerce with Nigeria includes exports of cotton yarn, fabrics, madeups & readymade garments, drugs and pharmaceuticals, engineering goods and agricultural products. India can also benefit from participation in Rural Telecommunication projects in Nigeria, export of Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) to Nigeria,